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MORE PAGES FROM THE DIARY OF AN AMERICAN ARTIST IN PARIS*

BY ELIZABETH NOURSE

Paris, March, 1915.

WAY out on the *rue de la Procession* the *Société Nationale des Beaux Arts* has established one of its *cantines* or restaurants for poor artists. It is a big, new house and stands in a little square. I walked out to see it to-day (March 8th). No one was there but the sweet, clean cook, and I went into all the rooms and about the beautiful brand new kitchen, where the dinner was being cooked. At this *cantine* they supply meat, a vegetable, a dessert and wine for *déjeuner*, and soup, a vegetable with dessert and wine for dinner, and the artists pay ten cents or nothing at all—just as they can afford. The three small rooms are lovely, so dainty, even elegant, with a portrait of dear Puvis de Chavannes over the mantel, and many reproductions of his frescoes. This *cantine* is called "*l'Amicale Puvis de Chavannes*." There were flowers and plants in profusion, and I felt that this was not just charity but true brotherly love. A fine portrait of our beloved president of the "*Nationale*," Monsieur Roll, was hung over another mantel above a great vase filled with dried grasses and leaves.

On my return I visited two other *cantines*. The first is in Tola Certowitz's old studio, number 1 *Grande Chaumière* where Henri Zo has his *cantine* on the ground floor for the "*Artistes Français*," and on the upper floor is another, run by Besnard's son-in-law, Monsieur Avy.

Tola's old studio was lovely in the old days, huge and bare because she was a sculptor and worked on such large clay models. The appearance is now quite changed. The walls are whitewashed and the most prominent feature is the big cooking apparatus. The supply of coal is stored in one corner behind a little fence, and under the staircase in another

corner the potatoes are piled. In the center of the studio are the long tables on trestles, with chairs and stools pushed close to take as little room as possible. It had the quaint air of an Italian *trattoria*, even the delicious smell of the *friture* carried out the illusion and I felt once more young and bohemian, as when I wandered in the narrow streets of Italy and lunched in those delightful little restaurants. The wine is in two big barrels in a third corner—(all the wine is donated by the Rothschilds). While I was there Madame Zo came staggering home from market, laden down with purchases. She attends to everything. When I squeezed her hand and said how good and charitable she was she laughed and replied, "Oh no, it's lots of fun!" She manages it all so economically that the *cantine* almost pays for itself. Of course they receive big donations, but Madame Zo is a typical French housewife besides being young and charming.

They gave their twenty thousandth meal here last week and in celebration of such an achievement Bonnat, Mercier, Renard and other "*gros bonnets*" came for dinner. "Yes," I said, "but you added something to the *ménù*!" "No, not one thing. They ate just what the others had and found it good." And I am very sure they did. But poor Tola! I am wondering where she is now—whether on the Steppes or trembling at the sound of cannon in Varsovie!

Monsieur Avy's *cantine* which is on the floor above is very similar, and twice a day both are crowded with famished artists.

But now a few words about my dear Salon, where I go to make inquiries about the French artists—our members. The Secretary gets out his book and is most obliging. It must be remembered that the big artists like Simon, Cottet, Ménard, Blanche and Henri Martin are not so young as they once were. I always think of the *trottoir roulant* of the Expo-

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FISHER GIRL

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THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

WASHINGTON, D C

sition, and how we are all on it and "While we seem to move not, swiftly fly!" And so it is the sons of these artists who are young soldiers now, though of course a few of the artists are young enough to go to the front and are fighting. Some have been put to guard the roads and bridges—that is what Maurice Denis has been doing ever since the war began. His family are still at St. Germain-en-Laye. And Monsieur Sureda, who paints such wonderful pictures of Morocco, is in the Territorial Army down there where the French are fighting.

Charles Cottet has gone back to his work with what heart he can. His nephew, who was as a son to him, was killed in the trenches!

Lucien Simon, too, and all his family are very sad, with the only son a prisoner in Germany. It was only after weeks of anguished suspense that they heard he was alive and pretty well cared for. He, also, is an artist, and the Germans have given him some clay so that he can model and thus while away the tedious hours. But Lucien Simon finds gratification in taking the convalescent soldiers driving in his automobile. He calls for them at the hospitals. Many of these poor fellows are in Paris for the first time in their lives, and have long dreamed of visiting the capital!

The great painter Besnard has not heard from his son for four months—he has disappeared. He cannot paint with this awful anxiety gripping his heart.

Rodin is in Rome, where he is very miserable and his wife, who is with him, is not well, either. I went to his studio on the *rue de Varenne* and found a big sign over the entrance gate "*Cantine d'ouvrier*." The Government has taken the lower story for the poor.

Jean Béraud is in Paris. I hope he will be inspired to paint something beautiful after this horrible war is over—some lesson he has drawn from it—its miseries and its beautiful charities.

L'Hermitte has two sons with the army—one in the trenches between Nieuport and Dixmude. And our dear President Monsieur Roll has also two sons fighting. So one can imagine how *triste* all these poor artists are, and if they work a little

it is only that they may forget or make the hours seem less long.

Young Boutet de Mouvel received two wounds in the battle of the Marne. He is cured and back again with the army. Sometimes they return three and four times. Devallière is a captain of the *chasseurs à pied*. Ménard's son is too young to go, but his sister who is also an artist has her son at the front. He came back very ill, but has returned to the firing line. Gumerie, who does such lovely work, had his son killed in battle. At a meeting of the *Société Nationale* a letter of sympathy was written him and we all signed it—poor father, poor artist! Jean Weber, who painted such amusing pictures of "gay Paree" enlisted in the infantry, and his son was made a lieutenant on the field of battle.

As I came out of the *Grand Palais* the other day I ran into Bartholomé, the great sculptor of that famous monument "*Aux Morts*" in *Père Lachaise*. He told me that he was working very hard—that he divided his days now, modeling in the morning and in the afternoon working for the poor and wounded. I remember years ago Charles Baude, the celebrated engraver, told me that of all the chef d'ouvres in art, sculpture, painting, literature or music, of the twentieth century, this monument "*aux morts*" was the chef d'œuvre, and so it seems to me.

Aman Jean is at Chateau Thierry, and his son is on the firing line.

Among the *Artistes Français* (that is, those who exhibit in the "Old Salon"), I know that Jean Paul Laurens has a son in prison near Berlin, and that the painter Tattegrain died suddenly in Arras, beautiful ill-fated Arras, while working on his great painting, "The Bombardment of Arras." He intended this to be a companion picture to his celebrated "Siege of Arras in the sixteenth century," which made his reputation twenty-five years ago.

Frieske has been working in the hospitals. He was in the Paris hospitals all those anxious days when the Germans were rushing down on our city. Florence Esté is painting again in Paris after an exciting summer, for the village where she was working had to be evacuated at the ap-

proach of the enemy. Another American, Cecil Howard, who is a young and very talented sculptor, after nursing night and day in the English hospital here, has gone to Servia where the people are so poor and the wounded soldiers so numerous that they receive little care. It is wonderful to see our talented American artists leaving their work and becoming nurses, doing the humblest work day and night—sometimes for thirty-six hours without rest, and with hardly any food.

John Byrne, of Cincinnati, with his talent for painting and his glorious voice, he who is the joy and pride of Jean de Reské, has given up everything to care for the wounded. Mr. Burnside and Mr. Armington, American artists, also work day and night in the hospitals.

But when these tragic days are over we can all rest and take up our painting once more. At present it is impossible; our own door bell seems to ring every five minutes, so many poor come to us for assistance and so many kind ladies with bundles of clothes for us to distribute. Sometimes our rooms are piled so full of furniture and clothing for the refugees that we can hardly reach our beds at night! And it is the same with all—the Art Societies of Paris have joined together in a benevolent "Fraternité des Artistes" and the secretary told me that they had received large sums of money from their brother artists in America, for which they are most grateful. All the work of caring for the poor starving painters here must be carried on by subscription.



ON LOOKOUT HILL

FRANK W. BENSON

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